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MY DREAM
AND
VERSES
MISCELLANEOUS

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"A simple cross of stone
Tells of his birth and death the day and year."—*Page* 36.

MY DREAM;

AND

VERSES MISCELLANEOUS.

BY

WALLACE HERBERT.

LONDON:
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1876.

English (alumnus)

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Dedicated

(NECESSARILY WITHOUT HER PERMISSION)

TO

GWENDOLINE CONSTANCE ETHEL,

BORN DEC. 6, 1875.

M638747

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PROLOGUE.—A CRY.

FRATRI DILECTO

P. C. W.

"The good knight's sword is rust,
The good knight's bones are dust,—
His soul is with the saints I trust."

A CRY.

INVOCATION.

I SLEEP—in dreams thy face I see,
I wake—thy voice is in mine ear,
And ever with me, hov'ring near,
Thy spirit lingers noiselessly.

The door is open, com'st thou not?
Thy chair is waiting for thee there;
See-est thou not my blind despair,
My love for thee is't all forgot?

My very soul with grief is numb.
I walk: I pray: it is not I,
Some creature else—no voice or cry
Comes from my lips, speechless and dumb.

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"
Ah, me! nor days nor time I know,
But ever onwards blindly go,
Losing myself in threadless maze.

Christ! Is there saving in Thy Blood?
Mary! Is lost the power of Prayer?
O souls that stay and suffer, where
Bow ye and kiss the Holy Rood?

God! In Thy mercy give me soon
Some sign or token:—answer none
Comes to me from the days undone,
From waxing suns or waning moon.

Alone I wander—not alone
His shadow on my path I see—
* Thou Christ in Blood! send help to me!
Send help—some Angel from the Throne!

I can no more—to wait and pray—
Prayer fails me! * * *
* * * * * Grant me soon to go
(Yet as Thou will'st) to shades below,
And wait with him Thy Coming Day!

* An idea suggested by the sight of a French picture of Our Lord, in which He is represented as literally deluged in Blood.

I.

First in the mimic war of play,
Flushed with success he proudly stands;
While round about admiring bands
Of comrades eager homage pay.

That brow was for the laurel meant!
That form—none carved can with it vie!
Mark well the fire flash from that eye
That speaks the soul within it pent!

His ev'ry action, mien and gait,
Proclaim him fearless warrior, born
Battle to wage with noble scorn
Of life, indifferent to Fate.

II.

We walked along this very path together
We two:
I plucked the wild flowers here, the ferns and heather,
With you.

The cuckoo's note told of the coming spring
That eve:
No thought or fear of sorrow on the wing
Did grieve

Our souls in bonds of friendship firmly knit;
No shade of evil o'er our paths did flit.

III.

Kyrie eleison,
Christe eleison,
Kyrie eleison.

THE organ peals its music in mine ear,
Voices of choristers ring sweet and clear.
Have pity, Lord! the burden cast on me
In mercy lighten! Set my tired soul free!

It comes again in plaintive minor strain,
Escape is none—to pray I try in vain.
The very incense mocks me with its rare
And perfumed fragrance borne upon the air.

Have mercy, Christ! speak to my soul of peace
And bid this jarring noise of discord cease.
Son of the Father, answer from Thy Throne!
My life without Thee fails—I am undone!

IV.

THEY speak; I hear as in a dream:
They tell me he is dead, is gone
To that dim world of realms unknown:—
Things to me are not now, but seem.

They take me to the room where he
And I have sat, and watch'd the sun
His downward course at evetide run
To meet the waiting sheet of sea.

A coffin wreath-bestrew'd, a sword—
The sword he wore when last we met—
God! can I evermore forget
He left me without e'en a word!

No word! no sign! oh come again
Back for one moment, in mine ear
Whisper thy speechless voice to cheer
My soul unnerv'd, unmann'd with pain!

V.

Mind is ailing, friends are failing,
Strange the sounds upon the air;
Sights unholy greet me, slowly
Leaving me are Faith and Prayer!

Now in madness, now in sadness,
Life is passing; even so,
Reft of every sense of gladness,
I were fain that it should go.

VI.

"I KNOW that he shall rise again."
Pale comfort; when my bleeding heart,
Pierc'd through and through with angry smart,
Beats only with a throb of pain.

"Had'st Thou been there he had not died."
Some Angel tell me: is it so
Lost eighteen hundred years ago
The Power of the Crucified?

"Lazarus, come forth." O welcome word
To those who lov'd—lov'd and had lost,
No empty sound of senseless boast,
Crown'd mercy of the uncrown'd Lord!

VII.

GENTLY we laid him in his narrow bed,
The trees were whisp'ring thoughts of voiceless woe,
The birds their songs had hushed—even the dead
Our grief at parting with him seem'd to know.

The slanting rays of setting sun lit up
The chancel window, linger'd at the door
And touch'd each flow'r daisy and buttercup,
With light of Heav'n ne'er known to it before.

The soldiers stood around his grave: not one
But would have shed his life-blood for him there.—
Ah me! The days of Faith for ever gone?
Ah me! for ever lost the pow'r of Prayer?

* * * *

Fling off, faint heart, the fears that gather round
And numb and poison thee with doubt of God;
Know that he waits but for the trumpet's sound,
While resting calmly 'neath the churchyard sod.

Rouse thy sad spirit! Suffer like a man,
Suffer, as he the cruel wanton blow,
That struck him down, and e'en abridg'd the span
Of life appointed to him here below.

Know that he lives! Lives near thee—far away—
The dead nor time nor space can know: to thee
Only time passes; wait and watch and pray,
God in His Mercy secret keeps the key.

MY DREAM.

INTRODUCTION

TO

MY DREAM.

THE moonbeams quiver through the lattice-pane,
And flicker faintly round thy empty chair;
No sound is heard save when, now and again,
The sentry's challenge breaks the startled air.

Friends all are gone, but I sit here and wait
And watch the shadow lengthening on the wall:
Mocking moon-dial! creeping hand of fate!
Dark drear reflection of thy funeral pall!

I peer into the courtyard's deep'ning gloom,
Where first I met thee, where we parted last;
I wander round and round the haunted room,
Grappling in vain the phantom of my past.

I look above; the stars no comfort give,
No answer to my eager angry mind,
In silence cold their lifeless lives they live,
And leave of living life no tale behind.

The turret-tow'r uprises, threat'ning, grim,
And shadows out fantastic shapes of Ill,
That seem to dance about in uncouth swim,
As answering some pow'r of Fiendish Will.

The cowls upon the chimneys bow and nod,
And whisper secrets which they dare not speak,
And bid me join the Dance of Death—great God!
Will the night never pass, the morning break?

* * * * *

Is all creation mad, or is it I
Who have gone mad myself and know it not?
Does not then madness end the misery
That gave it birth, in hope to be forgot?

Mad!—Well, I will go forth and, madden'd, greet
The mad companions who have gather'd round;
Merry the mad dance shall be, merry feet
Shall twinkle madly over the mad ground.

Mad will-o'-the-wisps shall light up the mad mere,
  Mad night-birds shriek a chorus of mad cries,
Mad beasts shall bellow mad discordant fear,
  Mad echo echo back its mad replies.

Mad laughing imps shall chase mad care away,
  And play mad tunes, a mad melodious band,
And we, all mad, will dance till break of day,
  While grisly Death keeps time with bony hand.

MY DREAM.

I.

Upon the mossy bank of babbling stream
A flow'ret grew :—
O tiny flow'ret, was it in a dream,
Or vision true,
I saw thee first, long since, and look'd for trace,
In thy frail features, of thy father's face ?

God shield thee, tender flow'ret, from all harm,
His Angels guard thy tott'ring feet each day,
Fend from thee ev'ry ill, drive off alarm,
And point thee out the narrow, blood-mark'd way.

II.

GRANT to me this, O Christ—on either hand
Let these two stand;
These two unconscious of all sin or shame—
Whose word shall blame
Their blameless spirits?—Grant that in Thy Day
They, sav'd, shall stay,
When Thou, Unerring Judge, shalt sit upon
The Great White Throne—
Grant me this prayer, O Saviour of mankind!
Pass Thou not on and leave my soul in doubt behind!

III.

O FOOLISH quest! Unrighteous wish! Each soul
Created from its Maker's Hand goes free
To choose its future, without aught control,
Throughout the great untim'd Eternity.

Each soul itself o'ermasters; or for good,
Or ill, its destiny carves out: but Faith,
Faith in the shedding of the Man-God's Blood,
And Prayer, can save from Everlasting Death.

IV.

Sinless Mother of God! In earliest dawn
Of youth, to thee
My prayers went up, to Heav'n Angel-borne,
From earth-taint free:

Help have I sought from thee, nor e'er in vain,
When fierce Hell-pain
Has rack'd my soul, tempted me to despair,
Curse God and die, bereft alike of Faith and Prayer.

V.

"WHAT He shall tell you, do it ye;" so I
Were fain to do His sweet Will, ere I die.
Toil with Him, suffer, crucify each day
Passions unblest, marks of the Tempter's sway.
Pray for me, Mary Mother—so to wine
The water change again, and God's best gifts be mine.

VI.

Is it not written, He has giv'n
His Holy Angels charge, that they
Shall overwatch them in their way
And guide their infant steps to Heav'n?

Call, and they come: the air is full
Of strange unearthly sounds to-night;
A flash of Uncreated Light
Has touch'd this planet, drowsy, dull.

Intelligences keen and clear,
Drawn up in countless hosts they stand;
Guarding the gates of Promis'd land,
Breaking the chains of Sin-born Fear.

Your prayers! O Essences Divine!
For o'er me mocking billows roll,
Drenching with pain my weary soul,—
Pray for me, so once more God's sun upon me shine.

VII.

O CHURCH Triumphant! Saints! Whose time is o'er,
Who wait to meet us on the timeless shore,
Fierce the attack of cruel foe to-night,
Fainting we cry for help amid the fight.
Tempted, as we, of old, the pow'r of pray'r
Full well ye know, send succour to us here.

VIII.

Patriarchs! Who in early days,
Gave God due praise:
Prophets! Who told of Virgin-born,
In earth's young morn:
Apostles! Who could witness give
Of God's Man-life:
Martyrs! Who fac'd, rather than basely live,
Stake, cord, and knife:
Confessors, Virgins, Innocents, All Saints,
Pray for us now, give heed unto our anxious plaints!

IX.

O Souls, who suffer for each earthly wish,
Unduly thought;
By price of priceless blood, in heav'nly mesh,
Ransom'd and caught;
E'en while ye wail the sins, whose scourge ye feel,
The right of pray'r remains: still may ye turn
heav'n's wheel.

X.

COME with me, child, nor fear the shades of night
That gather round us, dark as gloom of Hell,
On yonder mountain shines a beacon light
Our paths to guide, of sin to break the spell.

On yonder mountain-top three Angels stand,
E'en now their forms we dimly may descry;
Fierce flames the sword in each unerring hand,
As when of old it flash'd in foeman's eye.

Be not afraid; not foes, but friends, are we—
(May we remain so ever!) in earth's sleep,
O'er earth's poor creatures sleepless watch they keep,
Obeying the behest Divine; they three,
Faith, Hope, and Love, sweet Heav'n-born Charity.

ANGEL OF FAITH.

When the old man
His son would offer, at Divine command,
Nor stay his hand,
Though welling from the wound the red blood ran :

When promise came,
That barren womb should bare, and Hannah's shame,
Be all forgot in Samuel's great name :
I stood upon this hill, as now I stand,
Measuring out of human trust the sand.

ANGEL OF HOPE.

When in Egyptian bondage crush'd they lay,
By Pharaoh's henchmen jib'd and mock'd; each day
Courage sprang fresh to cheer their anxious hearts;
Wonders and signs wax'd rife—Heav'n's fire-flung
darts.

Not in despair the tears that Peter shed
At sorrowful sweet smile from Thorn-crown'd Head;
Those tears more precious than a nation's boast
I gather'd and up-bore amid Angelic Host.

ANGEL OF LOVE.

When all was shame,
And chos'n of God deserv'd no more the name,
Light from Heav'n came,
And kindled Charity's undying flame.

O earth-born mortals, will ye never heed,
While to your sin-steep'd souls I stand and plaintive plead ?

THE THREE ANGELS.

OURS to keep watch and guard
Ours to point Heavenward,
Ours to smooth down the stony ways and hard:

Ours to give homage, praise,
Throughout earth's fleeting days,
While our forms quiver in the Throne's dread blaze:

Ours, when our task is done
And rest eternal won,
Back to return to Him—yet Love lives ever on!

XV.

CHILD, let us wander on this mossy path
That leads to hamlet tree-embow'r'd: in bath
Of sweet sad moonlight dipp'd old ruins stand,
And throw weird shadows on uprising land.
The sound of striking clock from ivied tow'r
Proclaims in accents strange the midnight hour;
Come, cross this stile; in hallow'd ground and blest,
Here let us wait awhile, our weary footsteps rest.

XVI.

Hush, child! I cannot hear them speak,
If thou thy childish prattle in mine ear,
Musical with merry ring and sweet,
Dost babble without thought. Listen! They speak—
The dead speak.
And all around me ghostly forms are thronging—
Stay then thy tongue—it is not often
One interviews the dead.
What dost say?
Only the whisp'ring of the summer wind
Through foliag'd trees and over rustling grass?
And these no shadows from another world,
But tombstones white, on which the mocking moonbeams
Play idle tricks and jesting fantasies?

XVII.

COME then, let us look at these same tomb-stones.
I warrant me they will tell strange tales.
Here an old man rests:
Eighty-four? Well, we all must die—
A long day's work had he done.
What is this?
Two little children resting in one grave!
Two little flow'rets nipp'd in early spring,
Or e'er their pure pale petals power possess'd
To blossom into life and gladden hearts
Of parents, watching each awak'ning sign
Of reasonable thought!
Was it well done, O Reaper?—

"'Twas well, for so He order'd."

XVIII.

HERE a grave
Sod-cover'd, bound with rustic hoops and tended
By careful hand of suff'ring sorrowing friends,
And wreath-bestrewn. A simple cross of stone
Tells of his birth and death the day and year.

Ah me! Not taken ere the dawn of youth
Open'd upon his infant mind, unknowing
Of good or ill, of pleasure, pain and love.
Nor left till, like ripe fruit, his weary frame,
Exhausted with life's tedious troubling toil,
Dropt softly, and he fell asleep well satisfied.
But cut off in the early prime of manhood,
While life's rich pulse beat full and strong within him,
And life's dear loves were strewn upon his path—
He fell!

XIX.

How did he die ?
A soldier fell he in the foremost rank,
With battle-cry
Upon his lips, while foes before his death-glance shrank ?

Did sickness, grief,
Or weariness of world cut short the years,
The measure brief
Of human joys and woes, of human hopes and fears ?

Nay—not so ;
By treach'rous blow
He fell—a coward's hand his fearless soul laid low !

XX.

"WHERE is thy brother? For the earth in pain
Cries out and travails, angry for the slain!
Thy brother's blood aloud for vengeance calls,
On him who struck the blow My Swift Sharp
Vengeance falls."

"Am I my brother's keeper? Ask the sheep,
The flocks he tended; let the cattle weep
Their master—know I aught of him?—this day
I waited him, perchance he loiters on his way."

XXI.

"Upon thy brow I trace the mark of Hell,
Over thy path I lay My Ceaseless Spell:
Nor night nor day from suffering be thou free,
No peace come to thee through the long Eternity."

"My punishment is more than I can bear.
Open, O earth, and hide! fall, mountains, on me here!"

XXII.

Could they but come again,
For one short hour, to ease our pain,
And stop the working of grief-madden'd brain !—

Could we but see
Their place of suff'ring, where they wait for Thee
Sav'd, but by fire; blood-bought; captive, yet free !—

Some solace this,
To tortur'd minds—pledge sure of after-coming bliss !

XXIII.

I LIE upon the ground: thou underneath.
What! Shall a shovel-full of earth part us two?
Here,
Come, laggard sexton, bring thy spade and dig,
Dig deep. We soon shall find him.

Thou lazy, chatt'ring numskull, canst not work?
Begone, nor mock me with thy idle prating:
Old man, thou'rt waxing foolish in thy dotage.

XXIV.

Two men were toiling in a field,
And one was taken—
Where shall he comfort find, who shield
Him hope-forsaken ?

What says the brook to thee ?
Flowing for ever,
Babbling uncheck'd and free,
Towards the great river.

What do the weeping willows mutter
Over his grave ?
What do the birds sweet-throated utter ?
" So sleep the brave !"

XXV.

Six feet of earth
And sods to cover him o'er,
A stone to tell of his death and birth,
This—and no more.

Better have never lov'd
Than love and lose thy friend—
How has the trial prov'd ?
The broken bowl whose hand shall mend ?

Mocking phantoms, away !
Back from me go !
Full well I know
After night's darkest shades come brightest hues of day !

XXVI.

Stars! know ye aught of him?
Or planets as ye roll,
Luminous now, now dim,
Hold ye his soul?

Moon! in thy rocky caves
Do spirits dwell,
O'erwashed by plashing waves?
Of him canst tell?

Sun! do thy hard, hot rays
Circle him round?
Scorch me, too, with thy blaze
So he be found!

XXVII.

This time last year I knew thee not,
  This time last year we had not met,
  Thy very name to me as yet
Was all unknown; if heard, forgot.

Just here outside the door I stood—
  I mind me well the day and hour—
  Tempting the fitful autumn show'r,
In idle, discontented mood:

Waiting what for I knew not—Hark!
  The sound of wheels without the gate!
  What presage of approaching fate
Struck chill upon me, threaten'd dark?

A moment more I saw thy face,
  A moment more I clasp'd thy hand;
  Here close beside me thou did'st stand,
And we convers'd a little space.

The red leaves rustled round our feet:
The red leaves rustle still round mine,
And rustling weep in whispers—thine
Keep sentry on another beat.

XXVIII.

Days come, days go; time passes by,
Or seems to pass as we count time,
The ceaseless cadence of a chime
That echoes in Eternity.

We say, "The summer has an end,
The mellow autumn-tints appear,
The months eke out the tale of year,
And years the past and present blend."

We live, we move, we know we are,
Or think we know, or know we think,
And vaunt our knowledge on the brink
Of what will lay that knowledge bare.

Loud is our talk of Science, Art,
Imperishably strong, divine,
Of human intellect the mine
Wherein each miner hath his part.

We have mapp'd out the starry skies
And giv'n to ev'ry sun a name,
Made the pale moon blush red with shame,
A mark for curious gazing eyes.

What limit is there to the power
That sweeps with such unerring glance
Creation's vast and wide expanse,
Nor leaves unnotic'd e'en a flower?

Science and Art!—twin giants they—
O giants, help me in my need!
Say, Science, whence the wind did speed?
Art, call me back the past lost day!

XXIX.

THE fool hath said: "There is no God!
No God! No future! Men may prate
Of good or evil, deathless state,
Of Heaven's sweet rest or Hell's fierce flood:

"Eat we and drink—the time is small
For sensual pleasures—take our fill,
Ourselves with lust's enchantments swill,
Ere joys grown rank upon us pall."

O folly-feasting fools! The end
Ask of the fiend-enfolded souls
O'er whom the wave of fire red rolls—
Your necks to yoke accurs'd ye bend!

XXX.

A SOUND of voices in the air
That hum about but never speak,
A light, soft breeze that fans the cheek,
A whisper of unthought despair.

From the high pinnacle the view
Over far-reaching kingdoms spreads,
O'er water'd gardens, flow'ry meads,
O'er mountain-peaks steep'd in Heav'n's blue.

"All this I give to thee and thine,
(And all of this is mine to give,)
Say but the word and thou shalt live
Monarch of earth, subject of mine."

XXXI.

A FAITHLESS race has asked for sign,
"Tell us, Thou God, if God there be,
Allegiance do we owe to Thee?
Give to us proof of pow'r divine.

"Shew us or e'er the dark grave close
And wrap us round in gath'ring gloom,
Or ever peals our day of doom,
Some token of calm, sure repose."

"Moses have they; the prophets tell
Of the Eternal Heav'n-bas'd Rock:
Believe they not? Then would they mock
Though soul came back releas'd from Hell."

XXXII.

I THINK a time must come to all,
I know that it has come to me,
When each across the boundary
Can hear the warning voices call.

Warning they call, calling they warn,
We cannot doubt, we needs must list;
The veil is lifted, through the mist
The shadowy figures we discern.

Nor is there aught of wonderment,
Of swift surprise or ghostly fear,
These visitants do but appear
As messengers expected, sent

In season due, as we in dream
Dreamt in some other state have seen
The coming back of what has been,
The look'd-for fall of flowing stream.

XXXIII.

THEY sing throughout the streets all night,
"It is a custom old," say they,
"We prize our customs, come what may,
And hold them sacred, count them right.

"What, do you grudge one night of rest?
A few short hours the watch to keep?
Too few, in truth, your sins to weep,
While rolls the sun to east from west.

"You do not seem to care for this,
Our rude Welsh welcome of the morn,
You look on it with English scorn,
And say your English bells you miss:

"Our voices are the bells that ring
And greet the New Year's dawn of life,
We sing of peace—let ev'ry strife
Be ended in the song we sing."

XXXIV.

"A HAPPY New Year, sir, to you,"
(It was an aged crone who spake,)
"So may each day, as you awake,
Bring you good luck and blessings new."

"And there should sometime be to me
A New Year's day of glad surprise,
Some day for me the sun should rise
To set me from my sorrow free.

"Some New Year's day should speak of joy,
Of hope that never yet has shone
My dreary, loveless path upon,
Not even cheer'd me when a boy."

"Take, then, this New Year's gift," she said,
"In memory of Christ's sweet Blood,
And when you bow at Holy Rood,
Be Christ's sweet blessing on your head."

Then dipping in the stream hard-by
Her bunch of holly, on my face
She dash'd full quick an icy trace—
"Be this to you Epiphany!"

XXXV.

Say, Magi, when from Bethlehem's cave
Back to your kingdoms ye returned,
What was the lesson that ye learned ?
What was the gift the Child-God gave ?

Not all the wealth of Eastern lore
Could aught avail, as well ye knew,
To fathom out the secret true
That ye for years had ponder'd o'er.

One hour of sweet converse with Him,
In Joseph's arms, on Mary's knee,
On bloody steep of Calvary,
Or in some old cathedral dim

Where the red altar-light alone
Marks the spot where His court He holds,
Where He His mysteries unfolds
To broken-hearted sinners—one

Such hour is worth a thousand times,
A thousand times a thousand, all
The unmeaning talk we Wisdom call,
Fit echo of our nursery rhymes.

XXXVI.

Some hold, and seem to comfort find
In holding such a hateful lie,
In crying such a cursed cry,
In speaking such an evil mind,

That God has never yet made known,
Except in Nature's changeless laws,
Himself the First and Last Great Cause,
The Unseen, Unfathomable One:

And that all creeds are all alike,
All true in measure, false in part,
All revelation but an art
Of tricky priests, terror to strike,

And bind men's souls, with iron bands,
In superstition's cramping grasp,
While freedom's faint expiring gasp
Is heard unheeded through the lands.

And that God never came on earth,
Never took on Him flesh and blood,
Nor died on the accursed wood,
Nor rose again in second birth—

"Be my soul with the Saints!" The voice
Of madmen hath an ugly sound:
But, after all, is only found
Full of the emptiness of noise.

XXXVII.

One said, "O friend, it is not so,
It cannot be: this faith of yours
Of which you boast that it endures,
And will outlive all things below.

"The pow'r of Pray'r! O fancy wild!
The pow'r of Nature is the sole
And perfect pow'r, the perfect whole
Of Thought perfected, undefil'd:

"Ages may come, ages succeed
The age primeval of man's birth,
The very crust may change of earth,
The earth itself be changed, indeed:

"But still the all-begetting Fire
Of Nature change can never know,
From Nature Nature new must grow,
And to new Nature e'er aspire."

To him I, speaking, answer made:
" O friend, if I did so believe,
If I, in truth, could so receive
The Eternal words as all unsaid,

" If I could think there was no God,
None such, at least, as I have known,
No judgment at the Great White Throne,
This body of mere clay a clod

" To rot without the certain hope
Of future resurrection sure,
And all this tale of Christ a lure,
A madman's dream, of sand a rope,

" No punishment of hell to fear,
No sweet reward in heav'n to win,
No hideous hatefulness in sin,
No rule of right and wrong made clear—

" I would not live another day
My hated life, but in the abyss,
Which surely then must follow this,
I'd fling my very soul away!"

XXXVIII.

THIS tale of Christ the Angels came
And taught it to my infant mind,
Before my infant lips could find
The pow'r to lisp my mother's name:

The Angels taught me first to weep
The sins for which He bled and died;
The pow'r of the Crucified
The Angels whisper'd in my sleep:

The Angels taught me of the foe,
His cruel hate, his vast empire;
The Angels warn'd me of the fire
That rolls hungry, unquench'd, below.

The Angels told me of the fight
Between the creatures of His hand,
The faithful and the rebel band,
Children of darkness and of light:

The Angels told—those mighty Seven—
How many fought and many fell,
Until at last the King of Hell
Was conquer'd by the Queen of Heaven:

And then He had the right to come
Himself on earth, and lead His own
God-Man the right to raise His Throne
Within the Virgin's unstain'd womb.

Speak lower, friends: I cannot hear
Their voices if you speak so loud;
Naught is so madd'ning as a crowd
Of voices on a list'ning ear.

XXXIX.

THEY were the nurses of my soul
Those valiant women, who did strive
The flick'ring spark to keep alive
Of honour, and to render whole

That precious right, erst forfeited,
Of woman by their mother Eve,
Rekindle virtue and conceive
Some portion of their future Head:

And show that if, through woman's fall,
The curse of woman fell on man,
By woman's worth should be God's ban
Of exile yet removed from all.

Or ever I could read a word,
Without the pow'r that knowledge gives,
I knew the story of their lives,
Those mothers, sisters of my Lord.

XL.

She laugh'd outright—an idle laugh—
"What, say you? I shall bear a child?
Yes, when the old cow in the wild
Brings forth to cheer her mate a calf!

"I sprout a fruitful vine, o'er whom
Fourscore and ten of years have pass'd?
Let sandy desert, barren waste,
Bring wholesome store to feed my womb!"

O foolish words! With God all things
Are possible: hark! the angels speak;
Listen, while at the morning's break
The first note of the Angelus rings.

XLI.

"When will they come? The sign is there,
The thin red cord they bade me hang;
Do they not heed the anxious pang
Of breaking heart, unanswer'd prayer?

"Unanswer'd? No, never was prayer
Unanswer'd, so they tell me; yet
I cannot all my fears forget;
Forget the Spirits of the Air

"Who tempted me from earliest time,
Who ever curs'd me from my birth—
Half-sprung from heav'n, half from earth—
Outcome of some strange godless mime!"

XLII.

"My Lord! I lie upon the ground
Before my Lord! May his slave speak?
May she the awe of silence break,
And startle all the echoes round?

"My Lord! if I have favour found,
And pleas'd my Lord with music sweet,
With word well-tim'd, with well-tim'd beat
Of symphony, with well-tim'd sound

"Of song well-sung, so, please my Lord,
I fain would ask my Lord a boon—
God grant I do not speak too soon—
God grant I speak no careless word!"

XLIII.

"I WILL not leave thee nor forsake,
But with thee through the world will go,
With thee will ever sojourn, so
One sojourning we two will make.

"Thy people, country shall be mine,
And I will learn to know thy God,
And on the path which thou hast trod
My footprints shall be close to thine.

"And when they lay thee cold and dead,
Silent within the silent grave,
Where o'er thee weeping wild-flow'rs wave,
There, too, will I be buried."

XLIV.

" O HUSBAND ! If thee, in thy place
Of waiting, my weak voice can reach,
If upon Limbo's soul-strewn beach
A woman's cry its mark can trace:

" If thou canst follow still the course
Of cruel wrongs thy people feel:
If thou canst sharpen still the steel
Of vengeance, still be our resource :

" I pray thee, come and help me now,
While I, weak and unaided, go
To fight alone the boasting foe,
And write disgrace upon his brow."

XLV.

"O son," she said, "dearest and best,
Child of my old age, last of all,
Hearken thou to my feeble call,
Do thou obey my last behest.

"Spurn thou the tyrant's proffer'd grace,
Laugh at the mercy he would show,
Scoff at him dying—dying, go
And take thee thine appointed place.

"I follow thee, thy mother, I,
And others following look to thee;
Death is but passing to Him, He
(So is it written) too must die."

XLVI.

"O SAY whence is it that to me,
The Mother of my Lord should come?
Lo! at thy coming in my womb
The babe hath leapt, from sin is free:

"Is free—pre-sanctified; the joy
Of such a freedom who can tell?
They only who but know too well
The mystery of sin's alloy."

O glad sign of redemption's hour!
Though Mary, God-encompass'd, feel
The serpent turn and bite her heel,
For aye is gone that serpent's pow'r!

XLVII.

She decks herself in raiment gay,
And tires her rippling wealth of hair;
Round neck and wrist her jewels rare
Flash back the fierce sun's flaming ray.

Through the thick crowded thoroughfare,
With haughty gesture, swift she goes,
And proud and scornful glances throws
On rabble rout who throng her there.

Within the banquet-hall she stands—
None fairer! Form of matchless grace
Match'd fitly to a faultless face—
The centre of admiring bands.

Fair whited sepulchre! Her soul
Is full of dead men's bones within,
Steep'd through and through in putrid sin,
Drunk with the wine of Hell's red bowl!

Who is He who approaches now,
And looks with strange, sad, pitying eye ?
What virtue, as He passes by,
Shines from the throne set on His brow ?

A moment—and she kneels in pray'r,
And calls Him Lord, and pardon craves,
His sacred feet with tears she laves
And wipes with tresses of her hair.

" Thou art forgiv'n ! Mary, arise,
God-lov'd, God-loving, go thy way,
And love with heart all love repay,
Thy life of love a sacrifice."

XLVIII.

"FATHER, I thank Thee, for that Thou
Hast heard my pray'r and granted all,
The expiation of the fall,
Wrung from the bloody sweat of brow.

"These Thou didst deign to give to Me,
Excepting him, and him alone—
Traitor mark'd out, perdition's son—
Firstfruits, I bring them back to Thee.

"But not for these alone I pray,
Not for these only thanks are due:
Others there are, whose hearts beat true,
Who do but wait the dawn of day."

XLIX.

She turns and leaves the spot where they
Have left His body, cold and stiff,
In grave hewn out of virgin cliff,
And treads once more the dolorous way.

Retracing now her steps, she sees
The long procession wind again,
Shouts, curses, mock; soul-pierc'd, of pain
She drinks the bitter, death-drawn lees.

Undry, e'en yet, the blood He bled
To save her soul from taint of sin,
To gird her round with pow'r and win
Her crown unmatch'd, untarnished.

Was ever grief like grief of her,
Who gave to death and watch'd Him die,
And saw His soul flash and pass by—
Mother at once and Sepulchre?

L.

THE Angels come; their watch they keep
Around the soldier-guarded tomb,
Around the Mother's virgin-womb,
They weep and watch, they watch and weep:

They weep at sin's cold, laughing sneer,
They watch to drive all harm away,
They watch, waiting the dawn of day,
They weep the marks of nail and spear:

They weep and watch throughout the night,
Throughout the day they watch and weep,
Their sleepless weeping watch they keep,
Till breaks once more the morning's light:

Then while the guard is slumbering still,
The Angels roll away the stone,
The Mother bears again her Son,
Shines forth again the Eternal Will.

The Angels come, the Angels go
And spread the story far and wide:
Men laugh and jest, well satisfied
To shout the lie—"It is not so!"

LI.

"Flowers must fade," the little maid
Her low sweet song was singing;
"Birds away to southern day
Swift their flights are winging.

"Earthly pleasures, hoarded treasures,
Fail and leave no sign;"
Querulous age blots out youth's page,
Night o'ershades sun's shine.

"Stars may fall—hush! hush! they call:
Pales their beauty never;
Timid heart! what pow'r shall part
Thee from the Angels ever?"

LII.

THE long waves come and weep of home,
Why do they waste their sorrow?
Wait till they break, and broken speak
Their mad sad plaints the morrow.

Trees whisper peace, their voice must cease
When winds do fall; while shaken,
O'er hanging eaves, the ripen'd leaves
Thoughts of the past awaken.

I wake and lie, the fitful cry
Of swallow soon will rise;
Christ! give to me the right to be—
Take the blind from mine eyes!

LIII.

WHAT is the end?
Who can tell me the end?
When life is wanting,
And ghosts are haunting,
While priests are chaunting
The dirge of death:
Is there no friend,
Whose pray'rs can win,
And down-strike sin?
Answer me, Angels, send
Help to me in that hour when fails my fainting breath!

LIV.

O YE of little faith! slow to believe
Truths that your dull minds fail ere they receive!
Can e'en a sparrow fall and He not mark?
Is ever lost of great God-Love a spark?
Whom He loves best, those He chastises most:
His chastisement your pride, His Cross your welcome boast.

LV.

"CHILD! to mine ear, to-night,
Come sounds of strange delight,
Of music sweet: voices not these of earth.

"Wander thou on,
Leave me alone,
While songs by Angels sung to Angel-thoughts give birth."

LVI.

"'Tis but the ev'ning bell—
I know it well—
That sounds at curfew-time to still the noise of Hell."

"Nay, curfew-time
Has pass'd long since; the chime
Of bell has ceas'd, or rings now in some far-off clime."

LVII.

"'Tis but the waves that beat
Upon the shore, and meet
Their rocky comrades whom they foam-tipp'd greet."

"Nay, 'tis not this, the roar
Of waves upon the shore,
That fret in ceaseless fume for evermore."

LVIII.

"I HEAR the low of kine
That for their lost young pine,
Their plaint is pitiful in mine anxious ear—"

"Nay, other voices clear
And sweet speak to me—dear,
Pass thou on, leave me—let light on me shine."

LIX.

I FEEL out-tired now and fain would rest.

Let me kneel down, Mother, at thy knee,
An old grey-headed man, even as when
Six times ten years ago I knelt, and lisped
The pray'rs that thou didst teach me and impress
Upon my dawning mind. O let me pray
Before sleep overtakes me. I believe,
Hope, love; and sorrow for the hateful sins
That came all on Him in His agony,
And crush'd and scourg'd Him: mock'd Him, spat on Him,
And pain'd Him with a cruel biting pain,
Far worse than cord or thorn or nail—
Let me begin.

ACT OF FAITH.

In Tri-une God I firmly do believe.
In God the Father, Who made heaven and earth,
And all Things Visible and Invisible.
In Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord,
Who was conceived of Holy Ghost, and took
Pure Flesh and Blood of Mary, sinless Virgin—
And Virgin ever—likewise I believe
He suffer'd for us and was crucified,
And died and rose again: will come and judge
Those whom He shall find living, and the dead:
In Holy Ghost I also do believe,
Proceeding and from Father and from Son,
In Holy Church, Communion, too, of Saints;
Pardon of sins, of Body Resurrection.
And in the Life Eternal, so—Amen!

ACT OF HOPE.

My God! in Thee is all my hope! None else
Have I!
Great as my sins are, I will not despair,
For Thou hast paid for them. Thy Precious Blood
Was shed for me, as for all mankind:
I hope and trust in Thee, that Thou wilt save
Me when the waters of Death over-roll
And shut out Hope! Then will I still hope
When earthly hope is lost. God! give to me
The grace of final perseverance!

ACT OF LOVE.

My God! I love Thee! How can I not love
When Thy great Love surrounds me?—ev'rywhere
Signs of Thy Love abound! Thou art so good,
I cannot understand Thy goodness.
Still I can love
And do love Thee, and ever will love Thee,
And must love Thee—whate'er else can I love?
So loving let me die, my last true act,
On earth my love of Thee.

ACT OF SORROW.

I SORROW for my sins, O God!
Because these sins of mine gave pain to Thee!
Not from base fear of hell or hope of heav'n,
But because Thou didst grieve these sins of mine,
And pay for them the cruel penalty—
All for these sins of mine! Had no one else
Sinn'd but I, still Thou hadst come down,
And died the death! And so I grieve,
And pardon ask! Give pardon to me Thou.

PRAYER OF THE DYING.

Our Father, Who in heav'n art,
All-hallow'd be Thy Name,
Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done,
As there, so here the same.

Give us each day our daily bread;
As we our foes forgive,
Forgive us Thou, that so we may
The Life Eternal live.

Into temptation lead us not,
All evil from us charm;
Thus shall we praise, through endless days,
Thy Mighty Outstretch'd Arm!

What Shadow this, that comes my soul to greet?
If Death, I knew not Death could seem to me so sweet.

LXV.

CHILD! have I dream'd the livelong summer's day?
So ever now in dreams passes my life away!

AT LAST.

"Domine in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum."

THE sun has set. His last red ray,
Crimsoning creamy clouds, has faded;
Trace we our tortuous track of way,
Towards the turret-tow'r, tree-shaded.

* * * * *

Come they to curse us? Shapeless shapes of Ill
Gibbering with ghastly, ghostly glare upon us:
Flee fire-fed forms before His blaze of Will,
Whose cruel Cross rare refuge now has won us!

* * * * *

So, by faith sav'd, we sail into the haven,
No harlot-hurt our virgin veils has stain'd;
No snare of sin has soil'd our souls engraven
Each with His stamp, Who our salvation gain'd.

END OF MY DREAM.

EPILOGUE.

Dearest and best! O lov'd and lost
Friend whom I long had long'd to meet,
Friend whom God sent at length to greet
My longing soul, tried, tempest-tost.

Who, at the first glance well I knew
That pass'd between us, soul to soul,
Hadst come the half to render whole
Of my life incomplete, untrue.

How shall I thank thee for the time
We spent, too short, together here;
How thank thee for the message clear
Thou hast rung out in royal rhyme?

How shall I thank thee for the store,
The mystery of knowledge, thou
Hast taught me, ignorant till now
Of love's late lesson, love-learnt lore?

For in that flash, when at the Throne
Thy soul did stand naked and pale,
Mine too half-pierc'd its fleshly veil
In speechless shriek—"Undone! undone!"

Nor yet returned for some short space,
(Or short, or long, I cannot tell),
But search'd for thine to say farewell,
One last long farewell to thy face.

And then my mind left all alone,
Untenanted by pow'r of will,
Stray'd here or there, and took its fill
Of wild illusions: pow'rless grown

To check an impulse, or to say
That this shall be so and not that;
To choose some point of thought, whereat
It could recover itself, stay

Its headlong course, and righted so
As on a pivot could maintain
Its balance justly pois'd again—
Then, righted, on its right track go.

And so as in a dream or trance
The days pass'd by, while mind stood still,
And weeks were months—I took my fill
Of madness, madden'd with Death's dance.

Men look'd upon me with strange stare;
Some said, "He should not be alone,"
Some laugh'd, some spake in pitying tone,
Others, "What then? Not our affair."

But I, unheedful of all this,
Stay'd waiting for the sign from thee,
The sign I knew would come to me,
The soundless word, the spirit-kiss.

So waited I, till the grey dawn
Of hope arose to cheer my mind,
Till I could, ever seeking, find
A foot-hold on the untrodden lawn,

The neutral ground, on which do fall
The arrows shot from unseen spheres,
Where truth as very truth appears,
Not darkly seen, if seen at all.

And when the message came at last,
(The message that I may not tell),
Sweet peace upon my tired soul fell,
Sweet hope did blot out all the past.

So I can leave thee now, content
To cry no more in futile cry,
To ask no more the reason why,
To bear the Cross in Mercy sent.

VERSES MISCELLANEOUS.

THE DAY THAT MUST COME.

TELL you a story, child!
While beats the storm against the pane,
And fierce sounds come from foaming main,
And wind is wailing wild!

What of shall my tale be?
Of sea-toss'd ship and struggling crew,
Of fiery flame that through and through
Stout timbers pierc'd, and grew and grew,
Right cruelly?

Or shall I tell
Of endless calm,
'Mid waters warm,
While flap the idle sails at sound of bell?

Does this not please?
Well, then, sit here—
Have thou no fear—
Safe from all harm, lie thou down at my knees.

Of hope to thee I'll speak:
Give heed, my little one,
Thou art not left alone,
Not yet, though winds do howl and waters break:

A day must come—
Must come, though father watch, and mother pray,
When thou wilt walk thyself along the way,
That leads unto thy home!

Until then, rest!
On mother's breast,
Father of thee takes care—God loves—His love is best!

TO A LADY.

In thy true eyes
Lurks no disguise,
I love to gaze into their honest grey;
No second thought
I read there—taught
Of them, for simple heart, unselfish sense, I pray.

Through winding ways
Of life's thick maze
I've wander'd, learning many a tricky fence.
A look at thee
Brings back to me
Thoughts of my childish hours, my single innocence

As friendly star,
Shining from far,

Guides the poor storm-tost mariner to his port:
So the sweet grace
Of guileless face
Is beacon-light to minds of worldly wiles the sport.

God's blessing rest
Upon thy nest,
A special blessing of His love remain,
His watchful care
Shield thee from snare—
Wife, mother, widow—bring sweet peace to still thy pain.

TO A LITTLE GIRL AGED THREE.

Give you a kiss,
My pretty miss?
Of course I will,
And take my fill
Of plump red cheeks,
Whose ripeness speaks
Of childish health and strength—no greater earthly bliss.

In twice ten years,
If we should meet,
Will you repeat
The question, sweet,
Which now so simple, proper too, appears?

I fear me not;
With down-cast eye
You'll look so shy
(E'en pass me by)
That I shall feel a stranger, and forgot!

Well! while shines sun
I'd best make hay,
So here's good-day,
Now off—away—
Tell nurse about it all, and munch this nice plum-bun.

A DEATH-STRUGGLE.

"STEEP is the mountain side," they said;
"No footstep e'er has mark'd that peak;
Hark to the wild-bird's warning shriek!
Scoff not the pray'r for thee is prayed!

"Stay with us till, at least, the morn
Gives thee the light to track thy way,
In friendly refuge, friend-won, stay;
Strive not alone, unhelp'd, forlorn!"

"O friends! in vain ye plead, this night
I must, attack'd, attack the foe;
Your pray'rs I welcome, but—I go,
Awaits me now the unfought fight!"

RETROSPECT.

A LITTLE flow'r,
Only a pale blue flow'r!
What is its magic pow'r?

I stand and gaze:
And so to me
Come back past days,
And thoughts of thee,
Thee! as I saw thee first and lov'd thy virgin hour!

Old feelings wake,
Old pulses beat,
Old chimes ring sweet,
Old voices in my ear the silence break——

I've dropp'd my flow'r!
My pale blue flow'r,

The river bears it off—it floats away:
O little flow'r!
O cherish'd flow'r!
God grant that I may meet thee, wear thee again
one day!

MY CHILDREN.

Come round me, children! Did I, churlish, say
Your noise disturb'd my rest?
Nay, noise is soothing: noise ye then all day,—
I spoke in jest.

Let Ida read aloud her fav'rite book,
And Agnes sprawl the floor,
While Edie pulls Philp's hair with cunning look,
And Paul attempts the door.

What without you would be to me my life?
Would life e'en be? Then stay
And cheer me with your merry childish strife—
Passes full soon the day.

ON THE RIVER.

THE pitiless rain comes down again,
And sobs and weeps and gushes;
The pitiless wind—not far behind—
Taunts the weak wav'ring rushes.

The roar of fall sounds loud, and all
The river is awake:
The boat I row, I fear me so
It fetch the turbid lake.

What voice can still the cruel will
Of elemental pow'rs?
Whose speech dare brave the curling wave,
And strew the sea with flow'rs?

O doubting soul! Waters but roll
So far as He permits,
Who, at the prow, with fearless brow,
Undaunted spirit, sits.

ON THE SEA-SHORE.

THE tide is out: of sands about
The children take possession;
Childlike I follow o'er ridge and hollow,
And join the child-procession.

A castle here, a tunnel there,
A church, a model farm,—
For pigs of sand a little hand
Has built a pigsty warm.

Clear ringing laughter cleaves the air,
Am I too laughing—I?
Could I but laugh the demon care
Away, successfully!

Children, I thank you—one short hour
Of mirth to me you've brought;
So may you never know the pow'r
Of care-engender'd thought!

Laugh on! Your castles in the sands
Build ye while build ye may;
Short time remains; work of your hands
Will not outlive the day!

A FRAGMENT.

. . . . . Discrowned Queen!
The plaything of misfortune from thy birth;
The shuttlecock of policy! Toss'd about,
Thrown hither and thither; sacrific'd a child
To vile intrigue by base usurper planned.
Queen! Who hast born with touching dignity
The howls of unchain'd rabble, hounded on
By traitors perjur'd ingrate and foresworn.
Who hast been pelted with the jeers and sneers
Of venal press, of low and sordid souls
Whom never feeling of noblesse obliged
To do an action great or generous.
I hail thee and salute as I pass by,
And kneel and kiss, in fancy, thy royal hand,
Ysobel! Not least of thy right-regal race!

HAUNTED.

THE night is near: unspoken fear
Glow'rs and whispers hate;
Visages grim are looming, dim
Threatens my coming fate.

I stir the fire: the bitter ire
Of furious fiends flames fell:
No aid I find; my madden'd mind
Makes for itself a hell.

I strive to pray, to hurl away
The thoughts that curse the hour—
Vain hope! I feel the sharp swift steel,
I own the Tempter's pow'r.

The thick black mist will blind me—Christ!
Grant to me help—I fall!
No soul in vain, howe'er the pain,
Did ever on Thee call.

* * * *

Is that a star, glimm'ring afar,
Have the clouds broken—say?
I hear no more the full foul roar,
The night has pass'd away.

HOME AT LAST!

HOME at last!
Children wet from the beach,
Where the waves curling reach
And crawl as if they crav'd to claim the parting past—

Back to your home,
With dripping garments soak'd in sand,
With spades and buckets, hand in hand,
Upon the threshold of the door you stand—
Long-look'd for, here you come!

God send!
That at the end
When Angels are outwatching for the flock,—
Though fiends may mocking mock—
You shall come home, as now, Christ-won, your way shall wend!

THOSE WILLOWS.

THERE is sweet perfume in the air:
A trailing scent:
A cunning fragrance shed by flowers rare:—
I breathe content.

Shadows of sleep
Caress me now, and I can challenge peace,
And bid all care and care-full carking cease—
Wild willows weep!—

Ye know not rest;
In vain ye weep the gift ye cannot give:
Your song, at best,
Is of that other life that ye may never live.

NEVER AGAIN.

Say—again shall I see
The old home
My childhood's home,
Where once I used to be,
Where o'er the fields uncheck'd long time since I could roam?

Whom should I find there now?
My mother? No;
They buried her years ago;
Another fills her place: speak soft, winds, whisper low.

No welcome waits me—why
Should I return?
I watch the clouds float by,
I hear the poplars sigh—
I wait and mourn!

AT NIGHT.

What is that foolish cry
Over the grave?
What voice in agony
Calls out—Save—save!

Who is it tempts me here
Forsaken?
Whose speech speaks calm and clear,
And says: Awaken!

How can I wake, when Hell
Threatens with curse and shout?
Sleeping or waking, a tuneless spell
Is all about.

THE BREAK OF MORN.

THE stars are paling in the sky,
A sign of dawn shows in the east,
Birds half unclose a sleepy eye,
Flow'rs wait of light the coming feast.

The mountains, tipp'd with orange hue,
Like crown'd king-giants threat'ning stand,
And seem to gain fresh strength and new,
Casting their shadows on the land.

"How are the mighty fall'n!" He comes
And overrides their boasting heads;
And life and light o'er countless homes,
His lavish, bounteous gifts he spreads.

And now wake one and all. The crow
Of vaunting cock sounds loud and shrill,
The dogs make stir, the cattle low,
The herdsman mounts the rising hill.

The merry milkmaid, pail in hand,
  Out from the cottage door steps blithe:
The yeoman's up and o'er the land,
  The corn is falling on the scythe.

I, too, must quit my short-liv'd rest,
  And play my sorry part this day,
And start again in ceaseless quest
  Of peace to charm my pain away.

ON TENBY SANDS.

'Tis true, wife: yes, I do want rest;
All tell me so, and I know it full well.
For, for these last three months, a cruel sorrow,
A passionate grief, a heart-consuming care
Has work'd, worn, worried, wasted so my mind,
That verily I know not if it be
I who possess myself.
And then
The article I read in that Review
Came on me, tempted, tortur'd, torn with doubt,
Like molten lead upon soft, shrinking flesh,
And made me cry, with such a cry as should
Have pierc'd the very centre-piece of heav'n,
Suing for help.
I think I hardly know,
Or rightly understand, the writer's meaning:

He is a man cleverer far than I,
And skill'd in classic lore, able to tell
The bearing, force, and sense of every passage
And word of Holy Writ.
But if aright
I take him in, then, I think, he would have it,
That Christ was never Christ, at least, not Christ
Such as I know Christ, not the Eternal Word
Begotten of, but yet co-equal with,
The Father, God-Almighty—Christ, not God?
Then where is God, or is there God at all?

Come round me, children, kneel npon the sands,
And say (for 'tis the hour) the Angelus:
Together let us say it—
"In the Name
Of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—
The Angel of the Lord declar'd to Mary
And she conceiv'd of Holy Ghost:—"
And she conceiv'd of Holy Ghost! Enough—
Enough for me, finish it with your mother;
I rest content.
I know she did conceive

Of God, and He Whom she conceiv'd
Was Very God of God, Child-God, Man-God,
God now and ever!
Thank you, children, you
Have driv'n away the demon doubt from me.
Is it not written that He has reveal'd
To babes and sucklings mysteries divine,
Withheld from hard of heart and proud of mind?
So by your mouths of innocence He has sent
Clear message of sweet peace to charm my soul.
Now let me rest! Enjoy His bounteous gifts,
Drink in the air, and feast my willing eyes
On scenery of sea, and cliff, and coast,
And jagged jutting rocks that mock the waves,
Beating with foolish, angry, arguing rage
Against their unmov'd force: so beat in vain
The unwise wisdom of philosophers,
The crafty cunning of philosophers,
The madden'd malice of philosophers,
Against the Eternal Rock!
Now let me rest.

SAINT CATHERINE.

Angels bear her away!
Up from earth's sullen shore,
Swift be your flight,
Heav'n's pain-won light
Welcomes her evermore,
Waits her the calm of Christ's unending day.

Well has she fought the fight,
Well has she kept the vow,
Virgin she swore;
The hellish roar
Of foe is silenc'd now,
Over the baleful gloom of murky night!

Bloodless her face and wan,
Still now her limbs and cold,
Lifeless she lies,
Clos'd the soft eyes
That spoke sweet thoughts of old,
Whose rays with God's own royal radiance shone.

Bear her away ! Though we
Were fain to keep her here,
With us to stay—
Bear her away—
Your willing wings her bier,
Your swords her safeguard sure, your love her canopy !

SAINT CECILIA.

SHE strikes her lute—the Angels throng
  Around and listen rapt, intent:
She pours aloud her wealth of song—
  Souls exil'd quit their banishment.

And through and through Heav'n's vault of spheres,
  Re-echoed of infinite space,
Each note a perfect chord appears,*
  Bearing of hand divine the trace.

* Visitors to Pisa will doubtless recollect the Baptistery in which a note sounded by the sacristan below is heard in the dome above as a chord.

HER GRAVE.

A COTTAGE thatch'd and low; a stile;
Two thorn-trees blossoming white and red;
Of ruins arch'd and old a pile,
Sentinels silent o'er their dead:—

So to our trysting-place I come,
As fifteen years ago I came;
Thee undisturb'd holds the dark tomb,
Nothing is left me but thy name.

IN HOC SIGNO VINCES.

STILL is the night: unwatch'd I wander
About the rocks and through the caves—
Earth! why thy treasures dost thou squander?
Why feed the clamorous waves?

Ripples come stealing o'er the sands;
Though light their fall upon the ear,
Their coming threatens, hostile bands
They challenge as they near.

And still they come and menace still,
And search and quarrel for their prey,
Formless forms of unform'd ill,
Working each one its wilful way.

With terror struck I look around
For tidal mark for safety token,
Vain hope! An iron coast rock-bound,
Frowning cliffs, untouch'd, unbroken.

Must I fall? Is the fight over?
Help—comes it not? Rescue none?
Those fields above me, rich with clover,
Can I not reach? Am I undone?

Nearer me now; O hungry sea,
Pause for a moment, wait and listen—
How the moon's glimmer mocks at me!
How the stars glisten!

* * * * *

A flash of fire athwart the sky,
Light crossing light, a pathway shows,
That round and up the cliffs on high
In safety goes.

Break, curling waves! Splash on the beach
In angry wrangling for your loss!
I scorn your ire, sav'd from your reach
By sign of cross!

THE MOTHER'S PLAINT.

SHE cried out, "Tell me, O sea!
Is he dead, my sailor-boy?
Whom I dandled a babe on my knee,
The pride of my life and my joy?"

And the waves say "No," as they come,
And the waves say "Yes," as they go,
And she wails, as she wanders home,
"Ah me! I shall never know!

"O sea! give me back my dead,
If dead thou hast got to give!
Tearless, heart-tears I shed,
Loathing the life I must live!"

And the waves still answer her "Yes,"
And the waves still answer her "No:"
And sign comes never to bless
And end her unending distress,
And lighten her pitiless woe.

FOLLY.

I SOUGHT and found the wizard's cave,
And ask'd the old lore-learned man
My horoscope in stars to scan
And probe the secrets of the grave.

"Mount up that hill, my son," said he,
"And on the summit of its brow
Trac'd out in fiery letters thou
Shalt read thy tale of destiny."

I chose the path he pointed out,
I started at the break of day,
I toil'd along my weary way—
Now shades of night are all about.

And so I know full well that I
Shall never top the enchanted hill—
Vain man's attempts to learn the will
He shrouds in veil of mystery.

THE BIRD'S SONG.

A BIRD came down from Heav'n and perched upon
A tree:
And trill'd its lay of light, in tuneful tone
Of melody.

The tree spread branches far and wide: beneath
Two lovers came,
And whisper'd low and vow'd of truth till death
Love's endless flame.

They parted; never heard the sweet bird's song:
Then chanc'd to come
A mother dreaming of the son, bold, strong,
Away from home.

She miss'd the bird: a brother came and wept,
And linger'd there,
And mus'd and murmur'd of the spot where slept
His sister fair.

He went his way : the bird sang still : the tattle
Next I heard
Of merry children, making idle prattle
And joking word.

They scamper'd off. * *
* * A lonely outcast came,
Seeking for rest,
Her brow was branded with the mark of shame,
Unlov'd, unblest.

She sat awhile ; soft the bird's note and tender,
He caroll'd peace,
He promis'd hope and spoke of life's surrender,
Of soul's release :

And still she sat spell-bound, and ever listen'd
The Heav'n-sent lay,
While stars grew dim, and faint and fainter glisten'd,
At dawn of day.

Then back to Heav'n the bird his flight did wing,
His task was done;
Angels came down—hark, while the Angels sing,
"She who was lost is found, is sav'd, her crown
has won!"

TOGETHER.

"O Love," she said, "if I were dead
And grass grew o'er my grave,
And wild-flow'rs crown'd my low-laid head,
And trees their tribute gave;

"What would you do, tender and true,
If death did claim his right,
How live alone the long days through,
How pass each day and night?"

"If that should be, sweet Love," said he,
"If thou wert torn away,
And I were left in misery
"To mourn each night and day;

"I know not now the burden how
Myself could bear alone,
God grant that I should also die
And death have both his own."

* * *

The storm's hot rage doth battle wage
Howling on cavernous shore,
Let the waves break—they will not wake
Who sleep for evermore!

A VALIANT BOY.

A CHILD sat on a grassy slope,
And, child-like, car'd for nought;
"Childhood," he said, "is time of hope"—
Or said, or thought.

I watch'd his revels on the bank,
I caught his fearless laugh;
He dared and fought the nettles rank
With ready staff.

To right, to left, he struck all round,
His enemies laid low,
And made the watching hills resound
With merry blow.

A valiant boy! no hesitation,
No fear of consequence;
He'd fight, without a thought, a nation
Encamp'd in tents.

So fight thy foes, child, ever,
  Nor ever stay
In God's right cause thy best endeavour
  To win thy way.

AN OLD SONG.

Sing me the song you us'd to sing,
The song I lov'd so well,
Its cadence sweet charms me like ring
Of some melodious bell.

It brings back thoughts of buried days,
Old recollections waken,
My fever'd spirit once more strays
Through paths forgot, forsaken.

Sing it again and yet once more,
Perchance there may not be
"Once more" to me this side the shore
That bounds eternity.

A QUESTION.

WHAT was the promise that I made,
Or did I even promise make?
Should you in truth be not afraid
Your life on word of mine to stake?

Say, dare you trust me with a trust
As trust of child unknowing guile,
Who chases doubt with ready smile
When told no reason, save "You must?"

And can you link your lot with mine
And brave the future doubtful, dim
With many a strange portentous sign,
With many a danger-signal grim?

Have you the courage firm to face
Such shades of chance your path may cross,
Fix'd in your love, spurning all loss
Of world's success in worldly race?

And follow with me good or ill,
  Wealth welcoming or dire distress,
Careless of aught so you fulfil
  The virgin vow, soul-vow'd to bless

The hour that makes of us two one,
  The hour that turns to pleasure pain,
  That images a time-trac'd train
Of future fancies fondly spun ?

Is this the meaning of the glance
  You threw upon me, passing by ?
Nay, leave me not, look not askance—
  I read the truth in truth's own eye.

ITS ANSWER.

Why do you ask?
I love, and yet I know not if I love:
Ungracious task,
My honest single heart to probe and prove

I love indeed,
With such a love as words are poor to tell;
In hour of need,
God grant you love me even half as well!

But still I do not know
If I have love, love such as you may mean;
Nor could I ever shew
Or let my love, my true deep love, be seen.

Then question not,
Nor try my soul with foolish idle doubt,
In truth my love I could not live without,
Nor bear my lot.

A REVERIE.

O SOUND of hope! O hope of sign!
O little light that shinest red!
O welcome spark of love divine,
Watch keeping o'er our watching dead!

O breaking clouds that usher dawn!
O trees that greet the sway of wind!
O dewdrops scatter'd o'er green lawn,
By fairy garments left behind!

O soft, sad sigh of breaking heart,
Unnotic'd in thy silent sorrow!
O piercing pang of driving dart,
That seem'st from Hell thy sting to borrow!

O haunting faces, that I thought
Long since were chas'd away and banish'd!
O memories, too dearly bought,
Of joys no sooner priz'd than vanish'd!

* * * * *

I am myself once more, once more I tread
The path I trod a boy in years gone by,
I scent once more the wild flow'rs in the mead,
Once more the lark makes music in the sky;

And I am back in childhood's arms once more,
And childish pleasures pleasure give to me,
And all things are just as they were before
The day that broke in cloud of misery.

The brook flows still over the self-same stones
Its waters cover'd when I jump'd it last;
And blames the bank in those unmeaning tones
That us'd to vex me in the days long past:

Now I can smile; why vex myself at babble
Of idle stream its time-worn track e'er tracing,
Fretting against just curb, like foolish rabble
Of fools their unjust course of folly racing?

I watch unmov'd: and, listless on the grass,
Fling tufts into the air and count them fall,
Let the rude waters taunt me as they pass,
And, inattentive, answer not their call.

Whistle the wild fowl from the sedgy reeds
  Winging his course towards the misty mere;
Live through again a day of boyish deeds—
  A boy without reproach, without a fear.

So wipe out pain of past with present peace,
  That past pain seems herald of coming joy,
Past trials sweeter make the sweet release,
  The calm repose without aught of alloy.

Only I sometimes wonder now, as I
  Revisit each dear old familiar spot,
And ask this question of the soft wind's sigh—
  Am I indeed my very self or not?

AFTER THE STORM.

THE storm is over now, the thunder's roar
Has died in echoes faint along the shore;
The last fierce lightning-flash has riv'n the sky,
Scaring the glance of timid passer-by;
No more against the anxious quivering pane
Rattles in angry tones the hail-mixed rain,
The clouds have parted—see the gleam of blue,
Mark the rich rainbow's parti-colour'd hue.

The cattle quit the shelter of the trees,
O'er honied flow'rs I hear the hum of bees,
The thrush shakes off the storm-drops from his wings,
And tells contentment in the song he sings,
Children swarm out from many a cottage round,
And fill the air with many a merry sound,
With many a merry gambol prove the truth
Happiest of times the happy time of youth.

And it is sweet to sit upon the brink
Of stream, and hear its rushing waters think,
And watch the chatter of each tiny wave,
And image out of ev'ry swirl a grave,
Nod to the answ'ring bow of wind-touch'd reed,
And fanciful on fancied fancies feed.
Till all unconscious grown of time and place,
Sense gives the rein to nonsense for a space,
And strange old shapes of childhood's strange old friends,
A strange procession sense with nonsense blends.

There sprouting from the hedgerow on the bank,
That lifts up the canal, 'mid nettles rank
Th' aspiring bean-stalk shoots its way full soon,
And fastens on the edge of hornèd moon;
See Jack slips down and waits his foe's descent,
His subtle mind on mischief dire intent;
A bargeman passes—swish—his whip goes—crack!
Down tumbles bean-stalk—vanish Giant Jack.

Then cunning Puss-in-Boots comes on the scene,
And pops his whisker'd face the leaves between:

"Dear Marquis," so methinks I hear him say,
"Why waste in idle ease the hours away?
In lordly castle gather'd the guests all
Wait for your lordship to commence the ball."
Flash! bang! a smell of powder, sound of gun—
Where's Puss-in-boots? scamper, poor pussy, run!

What form of loveliness enchanting this
Whose lips provoke, whose eyes forbid, a kiss?
Royal robes, a coronet, softly on the grass
Trip dainty feet in slippers cas'd of glass,
My little Cinderella! Fav'rite pet
Of all the dream-land friends I ever met,
Come, let me feel the magic of thy pow'r,
Sit out a dance and spend with me an hour!

Ding-dong, ding-dong! What, eight o'clock! bless
me!
I'd quite forgotten all about my tea!
"My little, shoeless, ragged girl, come say
Whatever brings you out to-night this way?
And why this whimp'ring cry, this down-hung
head?"

"Oh! mother—if I came home late—she said
She'd send me, without supper, off to bed!"
"Poor trembling child, here's sixpence," let me act
The prince's part and fiction turn to fact.

She's off! Now, like my Cinderella, I
To soften heart of waiting host must try.

FAILURE.

I STARTED on my way and plann'd
The coming journey of my life,
The distant mountains loom'd so grand
I pictur'd me no time of strife;

But mapp'd my future out of peace,
And cheer'd myself with sunlit view
Of varied landscape, through green trees,
Whose changing shades look'd ever new.

And said, "I will go here or there,
And this shall be and that shall not,
And I will please me ev'rywhere,
Unchequer'd ever be my lot."

I will drink out the cup of bliss
That sinless pleasures mix and fill,
'Twere folly proffer'd sweets to miss
'Twere madness aught of joy to kill.

So I set out resolv'd to choose
My path, and rove or here or there,
Those hills in sight—how could I lose
My way, why think a thought of care.

* * * * *

The sun is nearing to the west,
The noon of life is passing now,
Weary and worn I crave to rest
My tired limbs, my aching brow.

I long to win the mountain-peak
And sleep secure beneath its shade,
No more for fleeting joys I seek,
No more of pleasure ask the aid.

Bitter the cup so sweet did taste,
Wither'd the flow'rs I plucked and dead,
My life seems all a barren waste—
Barren as rocks on which I tread.

O lost illusions of my youth
That shone so fair, so soon did perish!
What have ye brought to me in truth,
What have ye left for me to cherish?

Over and gone the pleasant dream
That should have been so sweet in dreaming!
Over the past that I did deem
Would prove more bright e'en than its seeming!

Over and gone—no, not *all* hope,
Still there awaits me dawn of light,
A ray across the far hills' slope
Seen dimly through the shades of night.

A LESSON.

WHY dost thou say, "It might have been,"
And mourn for what can never be?
What comfort can it give to thee
To search the pages lost between?

E'en if thou there could'st surely read,
"It would have been," instead of "might,"
To know that thou hadst guess'd aright,
Of satisfaction were poor meed.

Thy hated past let it alone,
Stir not the ashes of dead fire,
Rein in the longing, fierce desire
To call thee back the morning gone.

For even if it had come true,
Thy "might have been," how canst thou tell
What further curse of fate-sent spell
Had caus'd thee unknown ills to rue?

Learn thou this wholesome lesson well,
" What has not been can never be,
Whatever is is best for thee,
The future God alone can tell."

SPRETÆ INJURIA FORMÆ.

"O FOOL," she said, "you count it much
To boast a pure unsullied heart,
Untainted by the tempter's touch,
Unknowing of a human smart.

"You hold yourself, in pride, aloof
From ev'ry weakness, calm, secure:
You cry aloud that you are proof
From woman's smile, from siren's lure.

"You live in your cold world alone,
And wrap yourself in garb serene
Of intellectual pride, unwon
Of woman's speech, of woman's mien.

"Women! you scorn them, pass them by,
And wonder how a man can fall,
Caught by a sinful snaring eye,
Charm'd by a harlot's sensual call!

"Yet shall there come to you a day,
A day of days, to try your steel;
A thaw of thaws to melt away
The snows that round your heart congeal.

"So I, despis'd, contemn'd, may live
To see your pride humbled in dust,
I will my woman's wrongs forgive,
Forget the spurning of my lust."

I answer'd her, "You do me wrong
(And you I never wrong'd in thought),
I did but listen to your song,
And honest homage to you brought.

"I watch'd you as one watches whom
He loves with pure and stainless love,
A tenant of the silent tomb,
A star in firmament above.

"But should there come this day to me,
Which you in bitterness foretell,
And I no longer master be
Of all those pow'rs I prize so well,

"I do not doubt but to my life
Strength will be giv'n, the ruling will,
And in love's ever-varying strife,
Vanquish'd, I shall be victor still."

EARLY IN THE MORNING.

A LITTLE maid went out and stray'd
About the fields and through the grass,
Round her soft cheeks the soft wind play'd,
Over her head the clouds did pass.

The lark said, "Listen: while dewdrops glisten,
Before the sun rises I'll sing you a song;"
"Come," said the river, "while bulrushes quiver,
To the sea I will bear you swiftly along."

"Stay," said the flowers, "this morn it is ours,
Sweet is the scent from our opening leaves;"
"Weep," said the willows, "the long angry billows
Of evil are passing, rest under our eaves."

"Watch," said the church-clock, striking the hour,
"You cannot foresee what each moment may bring;"
"Climb," said the ivy, that round the old tow'r
(Parasite helpless) did closely cling.

"Wait," said the owl, "the sexton with showl
Is coming here early to dig out a grave;"
"Die," said the raven, "the priest, shorn and shaven,
Will bury you, o'er you the cypress will wave."

"Pray," said the Angels, "the dawn quick is breaking,
The sign of the Child-Christ is seen in the east,
The pow'r of the Child-Christ the star-worlds is shaking,
Pray the Child-Christ do bid you a guest to his feast."

TROUBLE.

WHY do you weep, my child ?
Is it a broken toy
That mars your childish joy ?
Or has some idle boy
Teas'd you, and all your pleasure spoil'd ?

Or did you careless fall
In trying too high to climb,
And bruise some little limb
Against the rude, rough-surfac'd wall ?

Does the smart hurt you much,
Too tender to touch ?
Nay, do not wince, the pain
Is less to bear,
If you do not fear
The kind firm hand that must press you again.

Let the cautery burn,
Let the seething flesh grow numb;
The fiercer the pain
The sooner again
Will the healthy flesh return;
The sooner again
Will the soul speak that sorrow struck dumb.

MY TIRESOME CHILDREN.

WHAT do you want, O children? You
Are always troubling with your wants,
You always wish for something new,
Your "something" is a ghost that haunts.

I cannot even take a nap,
I never do return from walk,
But up you all are on my lap
And all at once begin to talk.

Tell you another story now?
Suppose you think of one for me
Just for a change? There, in a row
Sit each of you on either knee.

Tell me a story each in turn,
And if, while list'ning, I should fall
Asleep, you practically will learn
How down fell Humpty-Dumpty and all.

A MADMAN'S CONTRIBUTIONS.

I.

Only trouble and toil,
  Only toil and trouble,
Nothing but moil and spoil
  And scuffle and shuffle and double!

If the sun would only set—
  That glaring intrusive sun!
If I could only forget
  The day that is done!

If I could only undo
  The past that keeps haunting me ever!
If regret would only go,
  And leave and return to me never!

Only trouble and toil,
  And foolish rest-killing mirth—
Would I were but a son of the soil—
  Would I had died at my birth!

II.

What do they say,
Those vexing ghosts that on the threshold flitter,
And ever come and go but never stay,
And weary me with false unmeaning play,
Memories bitter?

What do they want,
Plaguing my path with tiresome tireless worry,
Grim goblins, gaunt?
Front them and face—see how away they scurry!

But still come back again
And still surround.
Could I but cease from pain!
O cold damp ground,
In thy unwelcome welcome is peace found?

Retreat is none
From their rude prying gaze?
What! Are they gone?
No ghosts—am I alone?
Mere shadowy outlines seen through moon's dim haze?

Come back, O friendly comrades of my youth !
Come back, if ghosts I care not, ghosts yet friends
in truth !

III.

Yes, you shall know
All I can tell, if you follow me now,
Follow through tangled brier and brake,
Follow while trees their branches shake ;

Follow, follow,
Follow through hollow ;
We shall see soon
The passionless moon
Shine and shed over us light from her brow.

Follow, follow,
The twit of swallow,
Hark as it calls us away, away !
We must not rest
(I dare not rest),
Soon will the sun's light wake up the day.

Follow, follow,
Through brake and hollow,
Through mud-smirch'd thicket and broken fence:—
Follow, follow,
Who would not follow
When Angels are calling and beckoning us hence?

IV.

The children are all gone, I call
In vain. Echo answers "in vain,"
Where are they hidden? Echo, answering unbidden,
Says "never again—again."

"Come, little faces," I cry, "your traces
Are marked on my soul"—"my soul,"
"Come to me gladly, come to me sadly,
Make me whole." Echo says "whole."

"Come, I am waiting, all things are fleeting;
Come to me, come back to me;
Come, I am seeking you." Echo speaking
Says, "let things be, let things be."

"Come, I am dying, I cry for you crying."
Echo says "crying,"—("O Echo, be still!")
"Come to me now, before the white snow
Of death's winter is round me, death's hand
grasps me chill.

"Pray for me, pray for me, hard is the way for me;
Pray for me, cruel and bitter the strife;
So you will fight for me, swift will the night for me
Pass, and the new morn will bring me fresh life.

"What! Am I dreaming? O dream, then thy
seeming
Is sweeter, far sweeter to me,"—"to me"—
"O Echo, be dumb, thy inquisitive hum
Makes it truly a trouble to be,"—"to be!"

"I sit here alone." Echo answers "alone."

* * * * *

REQUIESCAT.

"Roses red for her hair," she said,
"All on a summer's day,—
Roses white"—ah me! that night
Her soul it pass'd away.

Ashes to ashes! Dust to dust!
Naught from The Curse can save:
Waits one and all the maggot-rust,
Yawns for each corpse the grave.

So! But the grace of Christ's sweet face
Can spare from endless loss—
Mary! did one e'er miss Thy Son,
Who dying caught His Cross?

Rest then in peace, sav'd soul! And cease
From trouble, sorrow, pain;
Passes full soon of night the noon,
Breaks the true morn again.

NEVERMORE.

THE storm howls wild without—
I sit within by the fire-light's blaze,
Warmed by the flaming flame, I gaze
Through window-fence at the shimm'ring haze
That gathers all about;
Let the storm shout!

Let the wind rave
And clamour with noisy shriek,
And entrance crave
Through each cranny and creak,
And mingle reproachful cries with the out-heard
boom of the wave!

Safe in a cozy chair,
I cast away all care,
And laugh at the foolish roaring
Of wind and wave outpouring

Angry reproaches and vain regrets,
Regretful wailings and fretful sighs,
While a thick'ning gloom on the waters lies
And the sun in a cloud-bank sets.

In the twilight dim
I can just descry,
On the billows borne-by,
The outline faint,
Strange and quaint,
Of a boat floating away towards the pale sun's dying rim.

When the mad wind's riot
For a space is quiet,
And hush'd the wild waves' noise,
I almost think I can hear
The sound of a child's small voice,
In accents sweet and clear,
Begging for shelter and rest—for one short night's rest here.

And I rise from my cozy chair,
And I leave the warm fire-side,
And I brave the cold bleak air,
And I heed not the flowing tide,
And I call and warn the boat,
In passionate note,
Of the sunken rock, and whirlpool devouring
That round and round, in relentless scouring,
Seeks its prey far and wide.

And I look for the child, whose cry
I heard outside in the storm,
Its little form
Should surely be seen close by.

But the boat heeds me not—
Still in the twilight dim,
Of the pale sun's dying rim,
Onwards it floats in silence, it nears the fatal spot.
And I cannot find,
Though I search the livelong night,
Though I wait for morning's light,
The little child whose cry I heard o'er the wailing wind.

For me the warm fire-side
May wait for ever in vain,
For I cannot forget the boat that the tide
Bore away and brought not again.
For me the cozy chair
Need never again be set,
For I never again may forget
The cry of the little child that still rings in my ear,
That I still can sometimes hear,
When all sounds of earth are hush'd save the sound
of midnight pray'r.

THE NEW BABY.

YES, children, it is true,
Quite true—
While you
Last night were all asleep,
The Angels came
Tapping at the window-frame,
And brought a little baby for us to keep.

There she lies,
With clos'd eyes,
By poor mamma who's very ill to-day;
One little kiss from each—
Then come away,
Out to play
And pick up shells with Pappy on the beach.

What name did the Angels give her,
When they brought her across the river
And left her, a living soul for ever,
In our charge for a little while;
And bade us, with many a loving smile,
Start her upon the narrow road
That leads to God?

I'm not quite sure, but I think they said,
As they tenderly laid her upon the bed,
That St. Joseph had told them to tell me
That, if we wish'd it, he would be
Her Godfather; so you see
We shall probably call her Josephine,
When the sacred drops on her forehead shine.

"Josephine"—too long a name?
And not a pretty one? Fie, for shame!
Well, we can alter it if you like,
We can cut off the first three letters and strike
Out the "N"—now read it for me—
Effie? Well, Effie it shall be.

So morning and evening when you pray
And thank God for giving you one more day,
Pray for poor little Effie too,
Who has many a trial to go through
Before she can cross the river again,
And cast aside her burden of pain,
Before she can reach the opposite shore
Where the Angels are waiting her evermore.

A LULLABY.

WHAT, still awake, my child?
Do thy little eyes still peep?
I thought to find thee asleep:
What breaks thy rest?
Not the wind wild,
For it wails not now
O'er the steep hill's brow.
Safe in each nest
Each little fledgeling nestles—and thou—
Canst thou not sleep, sheltered on Mother's breast?

Did some untender hand
Rouse thee from slumber soft?
Or voices, heard too oft,
Of guests departing wake thee?
Of fays importunate make thee
Hearer unwilling
Of tuneful, trilling,
Tinkling, tickling, trickling, thrilling
Melodies softly sung by an unseen fairy band?

Is not thy Mother's voice
Able to still
The foolish unreasoning noise
Of creatures, who never may know the power of reasoning will?

Fret not thy little soul!
Let the light of yon star
Chase from thee far
Fanciful thoughts thou canst not control,
Imaginations unchildish that crowd in a feverish roll!

Do not fear,
Mother is near;
O'er thee bending,
Gently tending,
Sweet her song be in thy ear:—
Angels bless thee,
Soft caress thee,
Guard thy infant slumbers here!

THE RIGHT COMPANION.

THEY stand around, and speak in accents low ;
Shuddering, as thought comes of the fearful night,
Through which their souls have pass'd unhurt,
unscath'd.
They say—" He stirs not, shows no look of life,
His unclos'd eyes perceive not the grey dawn
Of coming day, whose signs seen through the pane
Kindle anew fresh hopes in sinking breasts,
And drive away thoughts of unholy strife."

But even as they whisper of his death,
And wonder of the spirit, fierce, untam'd,
That pass'd away in such congenial storm,
'Mid shrieks of ever-growing, gaining wind,
That raged about the ancient battlements,
nd waged war on the ancient battlements,
nd angered all the ancient battlements,
And whirled through all the loopholes of the turrets,

And wax'd brave through the loopholes of the turrets,
And laugh'd at the weak strength of the old turrets,
And toss'd the ivy in contemptuous wrath,
The cow'ring ivy in compassionate wrath,
As scorning such a wither'd, worthless foe,
As if it scorned so torn and tatter'd a foe.

"It was in such a storm as that," so spake
The faithful old grey-bearded seneschal,
"Long years have pass'd since then, one Christmas Eve
The old Lord keeping the old custom up,
The heathenish custom of his heathen race,
Swore oath upon the gilded head of boar,
Swore oath on oath (O custom curs'd of oaths!)
That he would put to death (O devilish oath!)
Such strangers as might cross his path that night
Or seek and claim his hospitality."

"Hush!" said another, "speak not of that night,
Even to think of which does make one's blood
Run cold, and curdle in contracting veins,
Or you, perchance, may wake the dead himself.

I could have sworn, even as you were speaking,
That light flash'd swift from out those fiery eyes,
Those staring, glaring, fix'd, fierce, fiery eyes,
As bidding you to hold your peace.

Why comes not
His Son, Knight Sintram? He should have been here,
Returned from the old Castle of the Moon,
Before this hour. Go, bid the watchman climb
The watch-tow'r and see if he can see aught
Of him."

VOICES IN THE AIR.

Pray'rs have been pray'd,
And Masses said,
And beads told,
In churches old
By men bold
And many a timid maiden;
In convent cell,
At sound of bell
That speaks peace to hearts sorrowful and sin-laden.

But in spite of all
That has been done,
We cannot call
The day won,
Till to the father returns from the fight victorious his son.

"A horseman now rides up from out the pass,
His form is like Knight Sintram's, but there hangs
A mist or cloud about him,—surely he
Is wearing armour of a plain esquire,
Not clad in knightly mail—"

"So, so then it is he,
For when he left us yestermorn, he said,
'The time of trial is at hand, and I
Have need of armour, as befits my calling,
(Although I go to fight no bodily foe,)
Give me a suit:' then chanced to come to hand
The armour which Weigand the Slender wore
The day he first look'd on Verena's face—
So now this is Knight Sintram."

"But as I see or see not through the cloud
That hangs about him, there appears to be
A wreath of red leaves crowning his horse's head:
Such wreath Knight Sintram never would have had
Put on his horse, humblest of sinful men."

"So, so it is he then, for as I saddled
His horse for him, I heard, or thought I heard,
Sweet voices in the air, around me singing,
'Crown, crown his horse, deck him with leaves of
triumph;
The good Knight now rides forth to victory!'"

Knight Sintram passes through the Castle gate,
Knight Sintram's spurs ring upon the stone stair,
And Skovmark follows him with joyous bark—
Old Biorn, rising on his bed of death,
Glares on the startled, stammering watchers round,
And speaks in accents of another world:
"He comes, he comes—my son—I know he comes;
But who comes with him? Look you all, good people,
Though Gotthard Lenz and Ruddlieb pray for me,
Although Verena tell her beads for me,

Though Masses have been offered up for me,
Though God's own Mother intercede for me,
If Sintram bring the Little Master with him,
The grinning, loathsome Little Master with him,
Then am I lost to all Eternity!

* * * * *

"The cloud! O wrap me round, thou gentle cloud
Praise be to God for this, my son! my son!
It is the Right Companion, sweet, pale Death!"

THE END.

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